

Town Council Meeting: 09 March 2009



Town of Garrett Park
PO Box 84
4600 Waverly Avenue
Garrett Park, MD 20896

Regular Meeting of Town Council
Garrett Park Town Hall
10814 Kenilworth Avenue
Garrett Park, MD 20896

MINUTES

Meeting Call to Order: Mayor Keller called the meeting to order at 8:05 PM. Present were Councilmembers Hansen, Irons, Mandel, and Wegner. Also present was Administrator Pratt, Marian Green for the *Bugle*, and a number of Town residents.

Approval of Agenda: The Agenda was approved as posted without objection.

Presentations by Residents:

- Resident Henri Keller reminded everyone of the Film Society's screening of "Croupier" on Friday night.
- Mrs. Keller also urged the Council to work with the Judges of elections to bring the Town's absentee ballot laws into conformity with current Maryland law, which now stipulated that no reason is needed for a voter to apply for an absentee ballot. Election Judge Judy Heyman also stated that the Town should bring its ordinances regulating elections into conformity with state law, as did resident Pam Morgan.
- Gerilee Bennett provided the Council with an update on the status of the Garrett Park Estates Activity Center/Nursery School Building. Mrs. Bennett noted that she had already reported on the November 4th meeting between Montgomery County Parks Department officials and Mayor Keller, Councilmember Wegner, and representatives of the Nursery School, regarding a potential land swap with the Town to bring the building into Town ownership. Mrs. Bennett informed the Council that the Parks Department had recently sent a letter to Mayor Keller and had also made application to and received permission from the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission to pursue the land swap with the Town, but that the letter to the Town did not address in detail the concerns raised at the November meeting. Mrs. Bennett also reported that the board of the Garrett Park Cooperative Nursery School had changed its admissions policies to give admission preference to Garret Park residents, and that the Board also has created a new board position, Community Liaison Committee Chair, to be filled by a current parent who is also a resident of Garrett Park in order to insure that there would always be a Garrett Park resident serving on the board. Mayor Keller noted that the Town would require a permanent easement to insure adequate access to Porcupine Woods, and assurances that Garrett-Waverly Park would remain a neighborhood park and would not undergo a change in status or

development without the Town's agreement, should the land exchange proposal go forward. Mayor Keller also noted that any proposal to swap Town-owned land for the nursery school building would have to be put to a vote of the Town.

- Mayor Keller expressed his thanks to the Judges of Elections and the poll workers for their work in the recent referendum.
- Resident Natalie Shelton asked that the Town contact the County regarding school bus routes for the new Garrett Park Elementary School (GPES) and the actual and potential conflicts at crosswalks with students walking to and from school.
- Resident Tara Flynn reported that she has been attending the GPES Advisory Committee Meetings and that there had been a great deal of discussion and concern regarding the current and potential conflicts between pedestrians, cars, and school buses. Mayor Keller stated that he would contact the school's principal to get more information, and, if necessary, would hold a special meeting of the Town Council on March 23rd. Former Councilmember Dick Morgan asked that the Mayor also raise the issue of pedestrian access to the Grosvenor Metro station.
- Resident Mike Henley spoke to the Council regarding the demolition of the fire-damaged home at 11009 Kenilworth Avenue. It was the sense of the Council that the formal hearing on the demolition should be placed on the April agenda despite the lack of a plan showing that the property had been replatted into one lot. Mayor Keller stated that the Town would work to do all that was reasonable and appropriate to foreshorten the permitting process.

Mayor's Report:

- Mayor Keller thanked the Citizens Association for holding an informational meeting prior to the referendum, and for supporting the Seniors Steering Committee event on "Aging In Place" that was held at the Town Hall on Sunday.
- Mayor Keller appointed Councilmember Wegner as Acting Mayor from Tuesday, March 24th through Friday, April 3rd.
- The Mayor informed the Council that the Setback Advisory Committee was working on preparing information regarding the elements that will be part of the lot area coverage calculation under the recently sustained ordinance (Ord. 2008-05).
- Mayor Keller noted that the Town was researching how the Town might access federal stimulus funds.
- The Mayor told the Council that it was his intention to fill the Setback Advisory Committee (SAC) Vacancy left by former Mayor Donn Mader's death. The Mayor stated that he had spoken to former Mayor Peggy Pratt, who did not wish to serve on the SAC, and had decided to consider any resident who wished to apply, and no longer limit the seat to a former Mayor. Mayor Keller said that a number of residents had expressed interest and that he would seek Council approval of an appointment by email prior to his departure for out-of-Town travel on the 24th.

- Mayor Keller told the Council of his meeting with the Postmaster to discuss a number of issues regarding the Garrett Park Post Office, and noted that as many as two thousand pieces of mail a day had to be hand sorted due to addressing problems, taking considerable time.

Councilmember's Reports on Areas of Responsibility:

- Councilmember Irons reminded the Council of the Garrett Park Land Use Task Force initial meeting on Sunday, March 15th, and that Task Force Convener Gene Brantly was hosting a reception for Task Force members and their spouse/partners on Saturday afternoon.

Approval of Minutes:

- Councilmember Wegner **MOVED**
That the minutes of the 02/09/2009 Regular Council Meeting be approved as distributed. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Hansen and **PASSED** unanimously.

Action/Discussion:

- Introduction of Ordinance 2009-01 - FY 2010 Budget - Mayor Keller asked if Councilmembers had questions or concerns regarding the proposed FY 2010 budget presented in the introductory draft of Ordinance 2009-01. Councilmember Irons stated that she would like to put in \$2,500 for the use of the Land Use Task Force and **MOVED**

That \$2,500 be added to line 111000 - Elected and Appointed Officials to provide funding for the Land Use Task Force, bringing the total to \$5,250, and that line 9000 - Transfers In be increased to \$19,800. Councilmember Mandel seconded the motion, which **PASSED** unanimously.

Administrator Pratt noted that there would most likely be a number of modest changes to be incorporated in an amendment to the introduced ordinance when adoption was considered at the April meeting as more information became available. Councilmember Irons **MOVED**

That Ordinance 2009-01- FY 2010 Operating and Capital Budget be introduced as amended. Councilmember Mandel seconded the motion, which **PASSED** unanimously.

- Appointment of Election Judges - Mayor Keller noted that this was the year to appoint Election Judges to a new, two-year term, and announced that he wished to appoint Judy Heyman, Brenda Artim, and Margaret Goldsborough as Election Judges and Cliff Tarpy as Alternate Election Judge. The Mayor's appointments were confirmed by the Council without objection.

Town Administrator Report:

- 2009 Town Election Dates - Administrator Pratt drew the Council's attention to the 2008 Town Election calendar, noting that three Council seats were up for election on May 4th.
- Monthly Financial Report - Administrator Pratt reviewed the monthly financial report with the Council.

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 10:00 PM

Respectfully submitted,

[TOWN SEAL]

Edwin Pratt, Jr., Clerk-Treasurer